Scholarship for minority communities

3782. SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that Government announced in its last Budget a speical scholarship for students from minotiry communities;

(b) whether it is also a fact that despite the Budgetary announcement Government could not institutionalize the scholarship scheme; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) Yes, Sir. In the last Budget (2007-08) the Government has announced three scholarships programmes for students belonging to minority communities with the following allocations:

- Pre-matric Scholarships Rs. 72 crores.
- Post-matric Scholarships Rs. 90 crores.
- Merit-cum-Means scholarships at graduate and post-graduate levels Rs. 48.60 crores.

(b) and (c) The competent authority has approved the three scholarship schemes as below:

- Pre-matric Scholarship scheme on 30.1.2008.
- Post-matric Scholarship scheme on 29.11.2007.
- Merit-cum-Means scholarship scheme at graduate and post-graduate levels on 21.6.2007.

Funds collected through road cess

3783. DR. CHANDAN MITRA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the total amount of funds collected so far through the Road Cess on Petroleum Product purchases;

(b) how much of the amount so collected has been spent on construction of highways and their maintenance;

(c) whether Government has imposed a road cess, and the reasons why are highways users made to pay toll in addition to that;

(d) whether Government is aware that several highway construction companies are given the right to develop and adjoining such highways; and

(e) whether they may be allowed to collect toll in view of such benefits?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) No amount is levied and collected as Road Cess on purchase of petroleum products. However, an additional duty of excise for the purpose of the Union @ Rs. 2/- litre is collected on Motor Spirit commonly known as petrol and High speed diesel oil.

(b) to (e) Does not arise in view of (a) above.